

# INTRODUCTION

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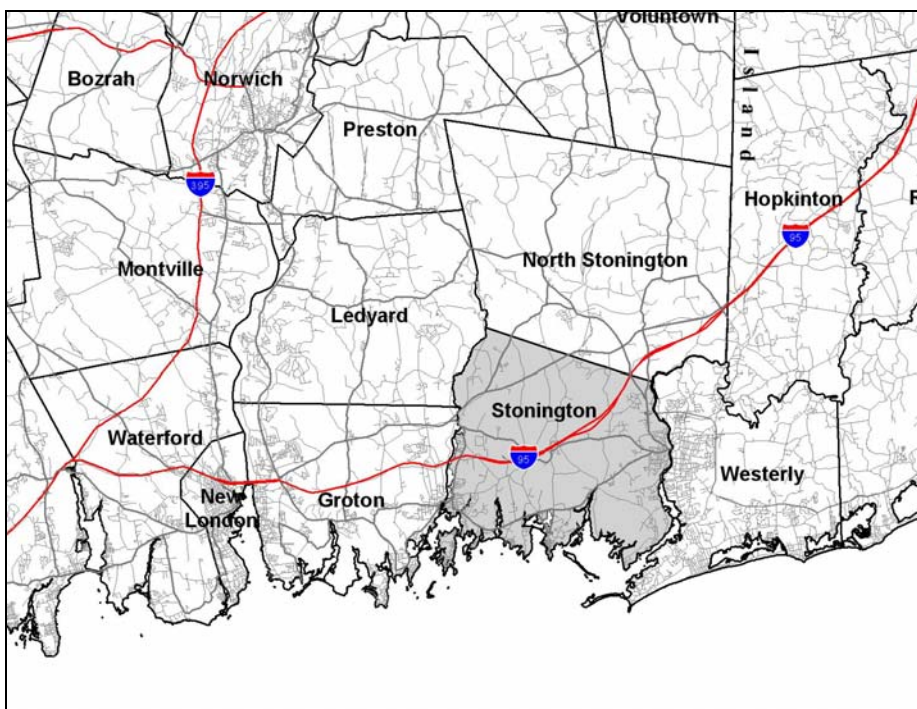
## Introduction to Stonington

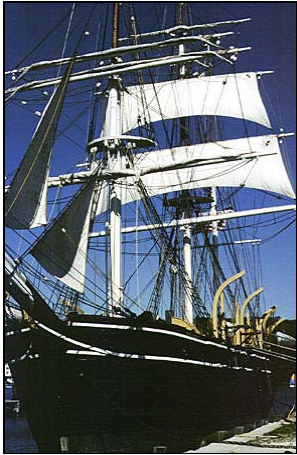
Stonington is located in New London County in southeast Connecticut. The Town is bounded by Ledyard, Groton and the Mystic River to the west, Westerly, RI and the Pawcatuck River to the east, Fishers Island Sound and Little Narragansett Bay to the south and North Stonington to the north.

Stonington shares the village of Mystic with the Town of Groton while the Borough of Stonington is a separate governing entity within its borders. Pawcatuck, like Mystic, is closely tied to its neighbor, Westerly, RI, sharing many common issues and services.

With its quaint historic villages, spectacular waterfront views, and rocky, stone-wall lined uplands; the aptly named Town of Stonington is one of the most scenically beautiful towns in Connecticut and plays a major role in the State's growing tourist economy. Stonington covers 50 square miles and is home to nearly 18,000 residents.

Stonington and Surrounding Towns





## Historical Context

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Stonington's present geographic shape and pattern of development owes much to its natural setting. The brooks, marshes, rivers, and Sound define three borders of the Town. The saw-tooth pattern of points, harbors, necks and coves created the impetus for much of the Town's settlement and growth.

### Colonial Period (1614-1780)

The first settlement of Stonington occurred on Wequetequock Cove in 1649, followed several years later by settlements on the Mystic and Pawcatuck Rivers. Most of the earliest settlers were subsistence farmers and this was supplemented by some fishing and other maritime activities.

In 1669, Stonington's first shipyard was constructed on the Pawcatuck River, followed by a second shipyard downstream in 1680. Early maritime activity was limited to fishing, shell-fishing, trade with larger New England ports and crude attempts at whaling.

### Early Industrial Period (1780-1850)

In 1784, the first of five shipyards was constructed on the Mystic River with still more in the Stonington Borough (known as Long Point until 1801). In its hey-day, the Town's harbors were home to as many as 78 whaling vessels with Stonington Borough becoming the second largest whaling port in Connecticut after New London. Mystic and Stonington Borough were not completely dependent on whaling and became preeminent sealing ports in addition to maintaining fishing and shipping fleets.

The three main villages of Long Point, Mystic and Pawcatuck formed during this era to serve the growing maritime, printing and other industries. Long Point was almost fully developed during this period, becoming the Borough of Stonington in 1801.

Mystic Seaport



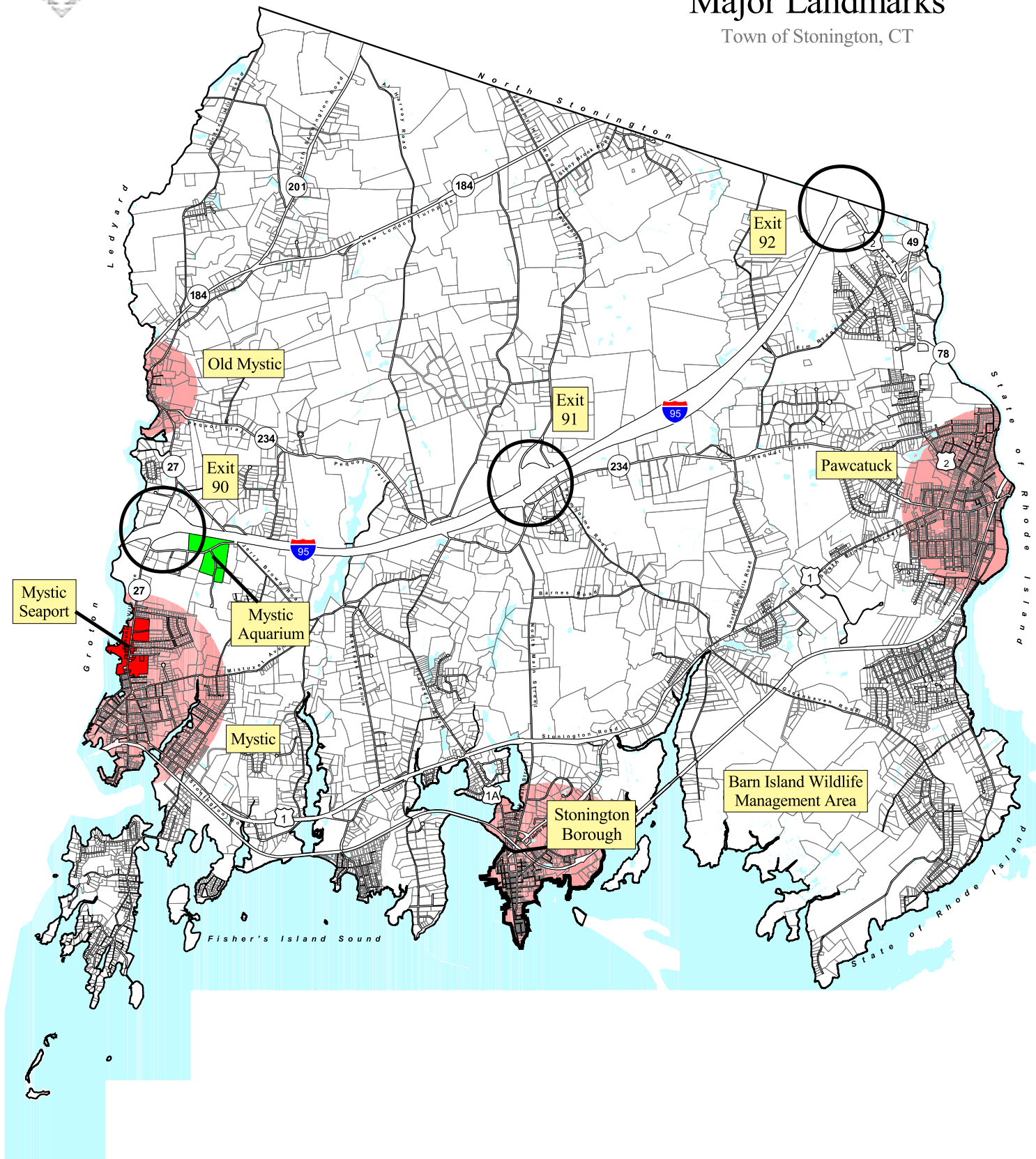
Old Mystic





# Major Landmarks

Town of Stonington, CT



0 3000 Feet



**Planimetrics**  
31 Eledge Drive, Avon, CT 06001 860-671-5263



### **Industrial Period (1850-1950)**

Despite the dominance of shipyards and other maritime industries, Stonington became home to a significant concentration of textile and allied industries as early as 1848. The construction of woolen mills in Pawcatuck and Old Mystic led to a succession of textile machine manufacturers and textile mills. With the influx of new manufacturing facilities, the two villages and the Borough saw significant growth and redevelopment, becoming the villages and Borough that we recognize today.

The maritime industries would peak and wane during this period. The decline of seal and whale populations would lead to the eventual demise of the sealing and whaling industries during the 1920s.

### **Modern Period (1950-Present)**

In the latter half of the twentieth century, the economy of Stonington went through some fundamental changes. The fishing and textile industries which offered local employment were affected by economic changes and the availability of resources.

With the end of World War II and the increasing use of automobiles, residents were no longer tied to the villages or the Borough where they worked. Stonington residents began to commute to jobs further from home. Stonington's maritime history became the basis for some major tourist attractions (Mystic Seaport and Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration).

At the same time, Stonington's farms and forests became the raw material for suburban expansion, with thousands of acres consumed during the latter half of the century as people were attracted to Stonington's location and overall quality of life.

It is these changes in the overall economy and land use that set the stage for this Plan of Conservation and Development.

**Former Foundry**



**Plastics Machinery Manufacturer**



## Regional Context

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Stonington plays an integral role in the region in several ways.

While about 3,000 Stonington residents worked within the community in the year 2000, another 7,000 Stonington residents worked in other communities in the region. As a result, one regional role that Stonington provides is a labor force that supports the overall economy of the region.

In addition, there are approximately 7,000 jobs in Stonington and so Stonington also provides about 4,000 jobs for non-Stonington residents. Again, Stonington is major contributor to the region's economy.

Stonington also provides a number of regional amenities such as:

- Mystic Seaport,
- Mystic Aquarium and Institute of Exploration,
- Downtown Mystic,
- Stonington Borough,
- Parks and open space,
- Retail uses,
- Hospitality uses, and
- Coastal amenities.

Overall, Stonington is a balanced community providing a labor pool and employment opportunities that benefit the overall region. In other words, Stonington is neither a pure residential suburb nor an economic hub.

**Mystic Seaport**



**Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration**



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